

REMARKS

Responsive to the restriction requirement, Applicant elects to prosecute claims directed to the species of the present invention shown in Fig. 2, with traverse. The listing of claims readable on the species of the present invention shown in Fig. 2 includes Claims 1, 3-7, 20-23 and 28-31, and accordingly, these claims should be examined. Claims 2, 8, 19, and 24-27 are cancelled without prejudice, and claims 9-18 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 20 and 23 are currently amended, and Claims 29-31 are newly added.

Independent Claim 1 is rejected as being anticipated by Egan, III et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,112,710). As amended, Claim 1 recites a valve bridge disposed between (i) first and second slave pistons and (ii) two engine valves. The two engine valves are spaced apart by a first distance, and first and second slave pistons are spaced apart by a second distance, wherein the first distance is different than the second distance. None of the prior art references identified in the Office Action disclose a valve bridge disposed between two slave pistons and two engine valves. The Vorih et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,321,701) reference discloses the use of a valve bridge to actuate two engine valves using a single slave piston. There would be no reason to add a valve bridge between the dual engine valves and dual slave pistons shown in Vorih et al. or Egan, III et al. because each of the slave pistons disclosed in those references is positioned to act on a single engine valve. Moreover, none of the prior art references relied upon in the Office Action disclose a system that actuates two engine valves using two slave pistons that are spaced apart different distances than the engine valves. Dependent claims 3-7, 20-22 and 28 add additional limitations that further distinguish the claims over the prior

art relied upon. Accordingly, the rejections of Claims 1, 3-7, 20-22 and 28 should be withdrawn

New Claims 29-30 also depend from Claim 1. The limitations added in dependant Claims 29-30 further distinguish those claims over the prior art of record. None of the prior art relied upon discloses systems in which the distance between the slave pistons is less than the distance between the engine valves actuated by the slave pistons, or in which the master piston is substantially perpendicular to the slave pistons. Accordingly, Claims 29-30 should be allowed.

Claim 23 is rejected as being obvious over Egan III, et al. in view of Cosma et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,619,965). As amended, Claim 23 recites "throttling hydraulic fluid flow past a single point located between the two or more slave pistons and the master piston." None of the prior art references relied upon disclose the step of throttling fluid flow at a single point between two slave pistons and a master piston to seat engine valves. Accordingly, the rejection of Claim 23 should be withdrawn.

New Claim 31 is also patentable over the prior art. Claim 31 recites a valve bridge disposed between (i) first and second slave pistons and (ii) two engine valves. None of the prior art references of record disclose a valve bridge disposed between two slave pistons and two engine valves. The Vorih et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,321,701) reference discloses the use of a valve bridge to actuate two engine valves using a single slave piston. There would be no reason to modify the system of Vorih et al. by adding a valve bridge between the dual engine valves and the dual slave pistons shown in Vorih et al. or Egan, III et al. because each of the slave pistons disclosed in those

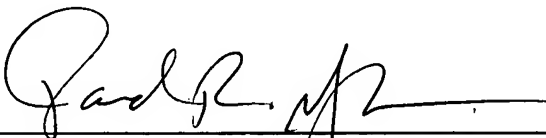
references is positioned to act on a single engine valve. Accordingly, Claim 31 should be allowed.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present invention define subject matter patentable over the references cited by the Office and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Office believe that anything further is required to place the application in condition for allowance, the Office is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee for a one-month extension of time for response and any other fee or deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to deposit account number 03-2469. Moreover, if the deposit account contains insufficient funds, the Commissioner is hereby invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to arrange payment.

Respectfully submitted,

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